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STATE
COMMISSION
ON THE
STATUS
OF
WOMEN



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April 2, 2015

To: Representative Karl Rhoads, Chair
Representative Joy San Buenaventura, Vice Chair
Members of the House Committee on Judiciary

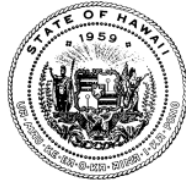
From: Cathy Betts, Executive Director
Hawaii State Commission on the Status of Women

Re: Testimony in Support, SB 982, HD1, Relating to Medical Amnesty

The Commission is support of SB 982, HD1, which would provide limited immunity for individuals who seek medical assistance for victims of alcohol or substance overdose.

Twenty one states and Washington, D.C. have similar legislation which allows limited immunity for individuals (most frequently close friends or family members) who call 911 to prevent an alcohol or drug overdose from becoming fatal. The most common reason people do not call 911 is fear of police involvement. This reasoning is more prevalent among young people although this demographic has the highest rates of unintended alcohol related deaths. Many colleges and universities have instituted this policy because it ensures the well being and safety of students.

This policy does not prevent prosecution for certain offenses, but it does allow limited immunity for individuals who witness someone close to them potentially overdosing. This policy would allow individuals to come to the assistance of another, without fear that calling 911 would result in their subsequent arrest for a minor infraction with the law. This policy doesn't seek to "reward" those who engage in potentially illegal behaviors. Rather, it seeks to encourage bystanders who may otherwise hesitate to act. The Commission supports SB 982, HD1. Thank you for your consideration.



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
P. O. Box 3378
Honolulu, HI 96801-3378
doh.testimony@doh.hawaii.gov

Testimony in SUPPORT of SB 982 HD1
Relating to Medical Amnesty

REPRESENTATIVE KARL RHOADS, CHAIR
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

Hearing Date: April 2, 2015

Room Number: 325

1 **Fiscal Implications:** None.

2 **Department Testimony:** The Department of Health supports SB 982 HD1.

3 This measure seeks to improve the outcomes from drug poisoning episodes by
4 encouraging those who may be affected by an overdose, or those around the victim, to seek
5 medical attention by calling 911. It has been shown that the fear of arrest or prosecution may
6 cause unnecessary deaths and bad outcomes that might have been avoided if appropriate help
7 was sought sooner. This harm reduction strategy is one of ten most promising practices in
8 reducing prescription drug abuse, based on a comprehensive national review of policies and
9 approaches.¹ Similar legislation has been passed in seventeen other states and Washington, D.C.
10 In order for this measure to be effective, the public needs to be made aware of medical amnesty
11 as a lifesaving measure for individuals at risk for overdose.

12 Drug poisoning is a serious public health problem in Hawaii and across the nation. Based
13 on Hawaii death certificate records, fatal drug poisonings among Hawaii residents have
14 increased significantly over the last 20 years to make it the leading mechanism of fatal injuries,
15 surpassing deaths from motor vehicle crashes and falls. There was an almost two-fold increase
16 in deaths from drug poisonings from 78 deaths per year in the 1999-2003 period to 151 deaths
17 per year over the 2009-2013 period. Almost all of the fatal poisonings in the 2009-2013 period
18 were drug-related (88%, or 754 of 856). Prescription drugs were implicated in nearly half (45%)
19 of the unintentional poisonings, including 36% of deaths that involved opioid pain

¹ <http://healthyamericans.org/assets/files/TFAH2013RxDrugAbuseRptFINAL.pdf>

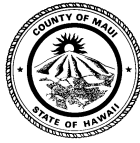
1 relievers. Death certificate codes further indicated that 52% of these deaths involved illicit
2 substances, most commonly methamphetamine (43%) and cocaine (8%).
3 Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Council Chair
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Robert Carroll
Elle Cochran
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Director of Council Services
David M. Raatz, Jr., Esq.

COUNTY COUNCIL
COUNTY OF MAUI
200 S. HIGH STREET
WAILUKU, MAUI, HAWAII 96793
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April 1, 2015

TO: The Honorable Karl Rhoads, Chair
House Committee on Judiciary

FROM: Gladys C. Baisa
Councilmember

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Gladys C. Baisa".

SUBJECT: **HEARING OF SB 982, SD1, HD1, RELATING TO MEDICAL AMNESTY**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this important measure. The purpose of this measure establishes limited immunity for individuals who seek medical assistance for themselves or others experiencing a drug or alcohol overdose.

I support this measure for the following reasons:

1. Overdose deaths are preventable. The majority of drug-related overdoses occur in the presence of others and there is usually time to intervene by calling 911, performing CPR, or with an opiate blocker such as Naloxone.
2. The most common reason cited for not calling 911 for help during an overdose is fear of police involvement. Witnesses fear being arrested for possession or contributing to the overdose, so instead of calling 911, people may try dangerous methods to revive the victim.
3. The number of drug overdose deaths in Hawaii increased by 68 percent since 1999.

For the foregoing reasons, I support this measure.

GCB:amm

COMMUNITY ALLIANCE ON PRISONS

76 North King Street, Honolulu, HI 96817

Phone/E-Mail: (808) 533-3454 / kat.caphi@gmail.com



COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

Chair: Rep. Karl Rhoads

Vice Chair: Rep. Joy Sanbuenaventura

Thursday, April 2, 2015

2:00 p.m.

Room 325

SUPPORT for SB 982 SD1 HD1 - MEDICAL AMNESTY/GOOD SAMARITAN BILL

Aloha Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Sanbuenaventura and Members of the Committees!

My name is Kat Brady and I am the Coordinator Community Alliance on Prisons, a community initiative promoting smart justice policies for more than a decade. This testimony is respectfully offered always mindful that 6,000 Hawai'i individuals are living behind bars, including 1,800 men who are serving their sentences abroad, thousands of miles from their loved ones, their homes and, for the disproportionate number of incarcerated Native Hawaiians, far from their ancestral lands.

SB 982 SD1, HD1 establishes limited immunity for individuals who seek medical assistance for themselves or others experiencing a drug or alcohol overdose.

Community Alliance on Prisons is in strong support of this measure that is all about saving lives. Overdose deaths are preventable. The majority of drug-related overdoses occur in the presence of others and there is usually time to intervene by calling 911, performing CPR, or with an opiate blocker such as Naloxone.

The **most common reason cited for not calling 911** for help during an overdose is **fear of police involvement**. Witnesses fear being arrested for possession or contributing to the overdose, so instead of calling 911, people may try dangerous methods to revive the victim.

The following is an excerpt from an article¹ published in Civil Beat by an internal medicine physician at Straub Clinic and Hospital (June 2014):

Does the social stigma of drug use make us less likely to care about saving the lives of addicts?

¹ Health Beat: **Hawaii Could Save the Lives of Many More Overdose Victims**-The state should join others that are overcoming uncomfortable questions to help speed up action to spare people who are dying from drugs, By KATHLEEN KOZAK, JUNE 23, 2014.

<http://www.civilbeat.com/2014/06/health-beat-hawaii-could-save-the-lives-of-many-more-overdose-victims>

Statistics from the Hawaii Department of Health Injury Prevention Program indicate that from 2009 to 2013, there were 773 recorded deaths from drug poisoning in Hawaii. This tops the 618 people who died in motor vehicle accidents over the same five-year period.

Based on trends apparent in this data, the annual numbers of overdoses are likely to continue to rise in the next few years. Despite an increased awareness of the dangers, there is still a huge black market for prescription pain pills, which account for a significant number of the overdoses seen in the last few years.

When people overdose, whether intentionally or accidentally, the first people on the scene are often friends or family members. If they find a loved one within minutes of an overdose, they are — or could be — in a unique position to save them.

According to the Department of Health presentation² at the 2014 Hawai'i Harm Reduction Conference, drug poisonings are increasing in Hawai'i:

– ~155 deaths per year, and ~4,500 hospital treatments

– Pharmaceutical opiates involved in 41% of fatal drug poisonings, and 12% to 20% of nonfatal drug poisonings.

Fatal drug poisonings in Hawaii, by various groups, 2004-2013:

- prescription drugs (55%)
- opioid pain relievers (41%)
- illicit drugs (36%)
- methamphetamine (27%)
- unspecified drugs (16%)

The number of **drug overdose deaths** - a majority of which are from prescription drugs - **in Hawaii increased by 68 percent since 1999** when the rate was 6.5 per 100,000. Nationally, rates have doubled in 29 states since 1999, quadrupled in four of these states and tripled in 10 more.

This bill would NOT protect people from prosecution for other offenses such as drug trafficking. It would, however, provide amnesty from prosecution to people who call 911 by prioritizing the saving lives over arrests for drug possession.

Laws have been enacted in 17 states and adopted as policies by 240 colleges and universities. The statistics from the Injury Prevention Branch of the Hawai'i Department of Health surely provide justification for this life saving measure.

What if someone you love was in a situation like this? Wouldn't you want someone to help him or her? Please pass this common sense, life saving measure and change the effective date to "upon approval". Mahalo for this opportunity to testify.

² **Drug overdoses and prevention efforts in Hawaii**, Dan Galanis, Ph.D., Epidemiologist, Injury Prevention and Control Section, EMS & Injury Prevention System Branch, Hawaii Department of Health.

2001, NYC - a friend died due to a heroin overdose. She was with her boyfriend who did not call EMS immediately, because he was afraid of getting arrested for having a small amount of drugs and paraphernalia.

This bill will allow people to call police, fire, EMS in the event of an overdose, themselves or others, and not be afraid of being prosecuted for minor offenses, such as possession of a minor quantity of drugs or paraphernalia (illicit materials would be confiscated if out in the open).

Please consider making this a law, it will help save lives for certain, and there will be no cost to implement.

Mike Chung, BA, HCPS



HAWAII SUBSTANCE ABUSE COALITION

SB982 SD1 HD1 RELATING TO HEALTH

COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY: Representative Karl Rhoads, Chair; Representative Joy San Buenaventura, Vice Chair

- Thursday, April 2, 2015 at 2:00 p.m.
- Conference Room 325

HSAC Supports SB982 SD1 HD1:

Good Morning Chair Rhoads; Vice Chair San Buenaventura; And Distinguished Committee Members. My name is Alan Johnson, Chair of the Hawaii Substance Abuse Coalition, an organization of more than thirty treatment and prevention agencies across the State.

The Hawaii Substance Abuse Coalition supports limited immunity for individuals who seek medical assistance for themselves or others experiencing a drug or alcohol overdose or other medical emergency.

HSAC supports specific immunity.

Almost half of the states in the U.S. provide limited immunity from arrest or prosecution for minor drug law violations for people who summon help at the scene of an overdose.

Good Samaritan laws do not protect people from arrest for other offenses, such as selling or trafficking drugs, or driving while drugged.

These policies protect only the caller and overdose victim from arrest and/or prosecution for simple drug possession, possession of paraphernalia, and/or being under the influence.

We appreciate the opportunity to testify and are available for questions.

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Andrea Tischler	Americans for Safe Access Big Island Chapter	Support	No

Comments: Big Island Chapter of the Americans for Safe Access support this bill because it will save lives. Each year approximately 150 people in Hawaii die from drug poisoning or overdose. The majority of those are in the presence of others prior to death. If people were not afraid of being prosecuted for making a 911 call emergency assistance could in most cases save a life. This is a sensible compassionate bill that requires passage.



Hawaii's voice for sensible, compassionate, and just drug policy

COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

Rep. Karl Rhoads, Chair. Rep. Joy A. San Buenaventura, Vice Chair

Thursday, April 2, 2015, 2:00 p.m.

Conference Room 329

State Capitol

415 South Beretania Street

Executive Director Rafael Kennedy in support – SB982 SD2 – Relating to Medical Amnesty

Aloha Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair San Buenaventura, and members of the committee,

Mahalo for taking the time to hear this medical amnesty bill. It is important that the legislature pass a bill providing these protections soon. Drug overdose is on the rise in Hawaii and around the nation. According to the CDC, it has been the leading cause of injury related death for the past two decades, and kills more than 100 people each day in the U.S.¹ From 2009-2013, drug overdose was the leading cause of fatal injuries **in Hawaii**, surpassing falls, motor vehicle accidents, drowning and other injury-related deaths.^{2 3} What's more, all indications are that as we tighten controls on prescription painkillers, **the problem will worsen.**⁴

The best data we have on users of intravenous drugs comes from the syringe exchange program run by the CHOW project. They have reported that half of the participants in Hawaii's syringe exchange program witnessed an overdose in the past two years. One quarter experienced an overdose themselves. This not only underscores the urgency of this legislation, but shows that **it will be effective**; most overdoses happen in the presence of other people, **people who can call for help.** 17 Other states and the District of Columbia have already implemented policies such as these,

1 Paulozzi, Leonard J. "Prescription Drug Overdoses: A Review." *Journal of Safety Research* 43, no. 4 (September 2012): 283-89. doi:10.1016/j.jsr.2012.08.009.

2 "Drug Abuse 2013 Data for Hawaii." Accessed February 10, 2015.
<http://healthyamericans.org/reports/drugabuse2013/release.php?stateid=HI>.

3 Hawaii Department of Health Injury Prevention and Control Section. "Hawaii Poisoning Data Summary," September 2013.
http://health.hawaii.gov/injuryprevention/files/2013/09/poisoning_Data-Summary0812a.pdf.

4 Khazan, Olga. "How the War on Painkillers Created the New Heroin Epidemic." *The Atlantic*, October 30, 2014.
<http://www.theatlantic.com/features/archive/2014/10/the-new-heroin-epidemic/382020/>.

to great effect. It has been shown to be the single most important factor in accessing treatment for overdose.⁵

Fear is the primary reason people cite for not calling for help.⁶ This fear of prosecution drives people to convince themselves that their friends will be alright without medical attention, to waste time dropping victims outside the hospital, or to undertake risky methods to revive victims on their own. These medical amnesty bills will go a long way toward assuaging that fear, and at **very little expense.**⁷ The truth is that only in a tiny minority of cases (according to a survey of officers conducted in Washington state, less than one percent) will this immunity affect whether or not victims and witnesses of overdose are in fact subject to criminal penalties.⁸ The **promise** of immunity however will give them the security to call for help, and will therefore be instrumental in helping to save many, many lives.

Much mahalo for your time and effort on this bill. This is an important and meaningful step for Hawaii, and along with increasing access to Naloxone, is a critical companion to efforts to curb prescription painkiller misuse.

Rafael Kennedy
Executive Director,
Drug Policy Forum of Hawaii

The Drug Policy Forum of Hawaii works to educate policymakers and the public about effective ways of addressing drug issues in Hawai'i with sensible and humane policies that reduce harm, expand treatment options, and adopt evidence-based practices while optimizing the use of scarce resources.

5 Melissa Tracy, Tinka Markham Piper. "Circumstances of Witnessed Drug Overdose in New York City: Implications for Intervention." *Drug and Alcohol Dependence* 79, no. 2 (2005): 181-90. doi:10.1016/j.drugalcdep.2005.01.010.

6 Melissa Tracy, Tinka Markham Piper. "Circumstances of Witnessed Drug Overdose in New York City: Implications for Intervention." *Drug and Alcohol Dependence* 79, no. 2 (2005): 181-90. doi:10.1016/j.drugalcdep.2005.01.010.

7 Burris, Scott; Beletsky, Leo; Castagna, Carolyn; Coyle, Casey; Crowe, Colin; and McLaughlin, Jennie Maura, "Stopping an Invisible Epidemic: Legal Issues in the Provision of Naloxone to Prevent Opioid Overdose," *Drexel Law Review* (Philadelphia, PA: Earle Mack School of Law, Spring 2009), Vol. 1, Number 2, p. 277.
http://prescribetoprevent.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/burris_stopping... - See more at: <http://www.drugwarfacts.org/cms/Overdose#Botline>

8 Banta-Green, Caleb J., Leo Beletsky, Jennifer A. Schoeppe, Phillip O. Coffin, and Patricia C. Kuszler. "Police Officers' and Paramedics' Experiences with Overdose and Their Knowledge and Opinions of Washington State's Drug Overdose-Naloxone-Good Samaritan Law." *Journal of Urban Health: Bulletin of the New York Academy of Medicine* 90, no. 6 (December 2013): 1102-11. doi:10.1007/s11524-013-9814-y.



Hawaii's Voice for Sensible, Compassionate, and Just Drug Policy

TO: HOUSE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

FROM: PAMELA LICHTY, M.P.H., PRESIDENT

DATE: April 2, 2015, ROOM 325, 2 p.m.

RE: S.B. 982, S.D.1. H.D.1 RELATING TO MEDICAL AMNESTY – **IN STRONG SUPPORT**

Good afternoon, Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Buenaventura, and members of the Committee. My name is Pam Lichty and I'm President of the Drug Policy Action Group (DPAG), the government affairs arm of the Drug Policy Forum of Hawaii.

The Drug Policy Action Group strongly supports S.B. 982, H.D.1.

Let me begin by thanking you for hearing this important bill today. Medical amnesty laws, also known as Good Samaritan laws, are in place now in more than 20 states and at many colleges and universities, with more under consideration every year. The measure itself explains how overdose deaths in Hawaii - from illegal drugs, prescription drugs, and alcohol - have increased greatly in recent years. As we hopefully move towards a compassionate, evidence-based, public health approach to drug control, this type of measure is literally a way to save lives.

As noted in Section 1 of the measure, if criminal punishment is intended to deter drug use, it is clearly too late for that approach when a person has suffered an overdose. In any case many of the overdose deaths reported in Hawaii and elsewhere were from prescription drugs or alcohol rather than illicit drugs.

Therefore it behooves us to suspend any moral judgments we may harbor about those who use misuse drugs or alcohol and instead look at the best ways to save lives and help people to call for medical assistance without fear of legal repercussions.

All too often the victims' companions abandon the victim out of fear of arrest or literally dump him outside of an emergency room. This is an inhumane yet understandable response under current law, but it is clearly no way to deal with a life threatening medical emergency.

This issue is personal to me since I lost a nephew to an overdose death fifteen years ago. I was visiting his mother last year when Phillip Seymour Hoffman's death vividly brought back that terrible time to my family and me.

His death and those of so many others underscores the urgency of getting this type of medical amnesty bill in place immediately to prevent more of such tragedies.

I urge this committee to move S.B. 982, H.D. 1 on to the full House today so that this critically important measure can progress towards passage. Again thank you for hearing this measure and for giving us the opportunity to testify.

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Jenny Lee	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
james crowe	Individual	Support	No

Comments: Support this bill. Save lives. Give a hand up to the willing witness. Throughout a long history such selfless service has been held up as an ideal.

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Mary Lacques	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Karin Hokoana	Individual	Support	No

Comments: I support this bill. The number of attempts at overdosing is also a problem that would benefit from this bill. Many people are just dropped off at emergency room entrances that are too dazed/confused to give an accurate accounting of what has happened. This often leads to incorrect diagnosis and improper treatment. A witness may be able to help attain the proper treatment needed to save a life.

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
E. Ileina Funakoshi	Individual	Support	No

Comments: COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY Rep. Karl Rhoads, Chair Rep. Joy Buenaventura, Vice Chair April 2, 2015 (Thursday), 2:00 pm Rm 325 Dear Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Buenaventura, and Committee Members: I am e. Ileina Funakoshi writing in support of SB982, SD1, HD1. This bill will save lives by quenching the fear of prosecution in helping an overdosed person. It would also alleviate people using methods which are not beneficial to the overdosed person. Some of these overdosed ones do not know the consequences of just experimenting with their friends' dangerous drugs and deserve a second chance in life. Each person's life impacts not only families, but communities. Thank you for your consideration and the opportunity to submit my testimony. Aloha, e. ileina funakoshi

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Leimomi Khan	Individual	Support	No

Comments: Support SB982 that would establish limited immunity for individuals who seek medical assistance for themselves or others experiencing a drug or alcohol overdose. (SB982 HD1). Hawaii has the 34th highest drug overdose mortality rate in the United States, with 10.9 per 100,000 people suffering drug overdose fatalities according to a new report, Prescription Drug Abuse: Strategies to Stop the Epidemic. The majority of drug-related overdoses occur in the presence of others and there is usually time to intervene by calling 911. The most common reason for not doing so is that witnesses fear being arrested for possession or contributing to the overdose so instead of calling 911, they may try dangerous methods to revive the victim. Passage of this bill would provide amnesty from prosecution to people who call 911 by prioritizing the saving of lives over arrests for drug possession. Please pass this bill.

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
David Kopper	Individual	Support	No

Comments: I strongly support this measure. For the past 4 years, accidental overdose was the leading cause of fatal injuries in Hawaii. The majority of overdose deaths occur in the presence of others, making them preventable with emergency assistance. This bill eliminates a common deterrence in seeking life saving medical assistance.

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Alan Katz	Individual	Support	No

Comments: As a physician and public health professional, I am strongly supportive of SB982. Good Samaritan laws which have been enacted in other jurisdictions have demonstrated life saving potential in cases of drug overdose. This measure (if passed) will remove barriers that may prevent the timely provision of first line responses and life saving interventions in cases of drug overdose. Passage of this bill will allow Hawaii to have policies in keeping with national best practices. Thank you for your positive consideration of this important policy.

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Stacy	Individual	Support	No

Comments: On 2/3/15 I witnessed an overdose while doing outreach in Chinatown. I had finished doing a housing assessment with a man and he had gone down the street to his van, that her and his girlfriend were living in. He came rushing back to me, telling me that his girlfriend "wasn't right" and asked for my help. I followed him down the street and immediately recognized an overdose. She was hunched and unresponsive. Her lips where blue and she wasn't breathing. I helped him take her out of the van and lay her flat on the sidewalk. I told him we had to call 911 and he began to panic. The paperwork for his van (registration/insurance) was not current and he was worried that his vehicle, their home, would be impounded. We wasted precious moments arguing before I called 911 anyways. The operator guided me through nearly five minutes of chest compressions before the fire department and EMS arrived. The woman lived. But I've spent many moments since thinking about what would have happened if someone hadn't insisted on called 911. Would she have lost her life because her partner was too afraid to call for help? No one should be afraid to call for the help needed to save a life. I strongly support this Bill and urge you to do the same. Thank you for taking the time to hear my testimony.

Dear Chair Rhodes, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify again in **Strong Support for SB 982** relating to medical amnesty. I understand that the bill has passed the Health Committee unanimously which I take as a clear sign that its importance has been recognized.

Imagine you could support a legislation that would result in less people in Hawaii dying in car accidents or accidental falls without costing you or the community anything - Would you hesitate to do this? I imagine you would jump to this opportunity, as most of us who care about our communities would.

SB 982 is such an opportunity, a legislation that does not cost anything, but would allow better and faster care for people whose life is threatened by an unintentional drug overdose. Allowing a 'Good Samaritan' to call for rescue services without the fear to be persecuted for any involvement will make it much more likely that victims will survive these situations and receive help. Overdose was the leading cause of unintentional injury-related deaths in the State in 2013, so your support of this bill will have a measurable impact in our communities. The bill asks for a limited amnesty, so if a bystander has committed any other crimes, this will not be waived because of this bill. A limited and specific waiving of punishment (for drug use or small amount possession) for a person who calls the authorities to save a life seems a small price to pay.

As a health psychologist, as a university faculty who teaches about drug abuse, as an expert engaged in reducing the drug-related burden in Hawaii, and as a concerned community member, I urge you to please help our communities and the people who are suffering from drug abuse and dependence by supporting SB 982. You will be helping to save lives in Hawaii.

Thank you,

Stefan Keller, Ph.D.

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 982 – Relating to Health

TO: Karl Rhoads, Chair, Committee on Health

Dear Chair Rhoads,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in Strong Support SB 982, SD1 relating to medical amnesty.

According to the Hawaii Department of Health (DOH), overdose was the leading cause of unintentional injury-related deaths in the State in 2013 and has been on the rise over the past five years. This mirrors fatal overdoses on the U.S. continent where 100 people die every day from overdose and it is the leading cause of accidental death. These overdoses can be prevented with a comprehensive approach that encourages bystanders to respond appropriately to overdoses. The majority of drug overdoses occur in the presence of other people and the number one reason cited for bystanders failing to call for help is fear of police involvement.

SB 982 will save lives by making it more likely for witnesses to call 911. At least seventeen other states have similar so called “good samaritan” legislation and over 240 college campuses have policies which provide protection from prosecution for witnesses who call 911. This bill appropriately prioritizes saving lives over prosecuting individuals for drug possession. As a public health researcher and a community member interested in seeing Hawaii take effective and compassionate steps to reduce these needless deaths, I strongly support SB 982.

Sincerely,

Mary Tschann
Honolulu

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Michael Long	Individual	Support	No

Comments: Drug-related overdose is the number one cause of injury-related deaths in Hawaii. SB 982, which passed the Health Committee unanimously, would give limited amnesty to those calling 911 in the event of an overdose. This bill has not cost and will save lives.

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Lisa Kimura	Individual	Support	No

Comments: Overdose deaths are preventable. The majority of drug-related overdoses occur in the presence of others and there is usually time to intervene by calling 911, performing CPR, or with an opiate blocker such as Naloxone. No one should be afraid to call for help! The most common reason cited for not calling 911 for help during an overdose is fear of police involvement. Witnesses fear being arrested for possession or contributing to the overdose, so instead of calling 911, people may try dangerous methods to revive the victim. Laws have been enacted in 17 states and adopted as policies by 240 colleges and universities. Please consider passing this bill for the protection of our citizens. Thank you

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Leilani Maxera	Individual	Support	No

Comments: I strongly support SB 982 relating to 911 medical amnesty. According to the Hawaii Department of Health (DOH), overdose was the leading cause of unintentional injury-related deaths in the State in 2013 and has been on the rise over the past five years. This mirrors fatal overdoses on the U.S. continent where 100 people die everyday from overdose and it is the leading cause of accidental death. These overdoses could be prevented with a comprehensive approach including education, prescription drug monitoring and training people how to prevent and respond appropriately to overdoses. SB 982 will save lives by making it more likely for witnesses to call 911. Many active drug users are afraid to call 911 in response to an overdose due to fear of being arrested for drug possession. SB 982 will give amnesty for drug possession, but will not protect people from arrest or prosecution for other offenses, such as drug trafficking. At least seventeen other states have similar so called “good samaritan” legislation and over 240 college campuses have policies which provide protection from prosecution for witnesses who call 911. This bill prioritizes saving lives over drug possession. Thank you for taking the time to read my testimony. Please support saving lives by supporting SB 982.

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Michaela Rinkel	Individual	Support	No

Comments: I urge you to support SB 982. This is good public health policy, has been proven to save lives and is needed in our state! Drug related overdose is the number one cause of injury related deaths in Hawaii.

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Shannon Rudolph	Individual	Support	No

Comments: Support SB 982 SD1, HD1

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Wendy Gibson	Individual	Support	No

Comments: Providing limited amnesty to individuals who seek medical assistance (by calling 911) has proven to be a life-saving technique in almost half of the states in the U.S. Drug overdoses are one of the leading causes of accidental death in Hawaii--many of them from prescription medications. Please pass this needed legislation. Mahalo, Wendy Gibson R.N.



HAWAII MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

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TO:

COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

Rep. Karl Rhoads, Chair

Rep. Joy A. San Buenaventura, Vice Chair

DATE: Thursday, April 2, 2015

TIME: 2:00pm

PLACE: Conference Room 325

FROM: Hawaii Medical Association

Dr. Christopher Flanders, DO, Executive Director

Lauren Zirbel, Community and Government Relations

Re: SB 982

STRONG SUPPORT

Hawaii Medical Association strongly supports this measure, which would establish limited immunity for individuals who seek medical assistance for themselves or others experiencing a drug or alcohol overdose. The HMA believes that this bill will save lives. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Officers

*President - Robert Sloan, MD, President-Elect – Scott McCaffrey, MD
Immediate Past President – Walton Shim, MD, Secretary - Thomas Kosasa, MD
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